

is that the restricted approach appropriate to examine the semantic field of 'heart' does not result in a similar conclusive concept of the semantic field of *nafs* in the ancient Arabic poetry and the Qur'ān.

In general Seidensticker is concerned with the lexical meaning of the words under investigation. To test the results he uses statistical proofs, but I cannot conceal my feeling that the application of such mathematical calculations does not repay the efforts made. In the last two chapters he goes beyond the purely lexical research. In the chapter 'Zur Vorgeschichte von arabisch "Herz" und *nafs*' (p. 172 ff.) he compares the results of his investigation with those made by Hebraists on *leb* and *nepeš* in the Old Testament. He advances a theory that Arabic *lubb* expressing 'insight' has been influenced by Hebrew *leb* or Syriac *lebbā* by the way of the Christian Arabian court of al-Ḥirah, and that the specific relations of *qalb* / *fu'ād* to the religious terms of belief and unbelief have their origin in the Jewish and Christian traditions as reflected in many Quranic expressions. The last chapter 'Zusammenfassung und Ausblick' (p. 186 ff.) looks into the later developments of *qalb* / *fu'ād* on the basis of two studies, one on al-Muḥāsibī by J. van Ess, and another on al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī by B. Radtke. Three supplements at the end of the book contain lists of the usage of *qalb* and *fu'ād* in metaphors, similes, and other poetical expressions. Seidensticker's study is well documented, one gains the impression that he did not overlook any relevant occurrence of the words under consideration. However, any one who is mainly interested in questions of cultural history and literature, may, disappointed, put the book aside.

UNIVERSITY OF ERLANGEN

WOLFDIETRICH FISCHER

STEFAN SPERL, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry. A structural analysis of selected texts (3rd century AH/9th century AD – 5th century AH/11th century AD)*, (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization), Cambridge University Press 1989. ISBN: 0-521-35485-4.

Almost thirty years ago I published a study of the 'Abbāsid poet al-Ma'mūnī in which I raised the question whether or not the term 'mannerism' was applicable to that style of Arabic poetry which is usually called *badī'*.<sup>1</sup> The booklet unleashed a vivid discussion which is still going on and to which, after the valuable thoughts advanced by W. Heinrichs,<sup>2</sup> the book under review forms the most recent, and in my view also the most important, contribution. At the same time, some scholars of Arabic studies have introduced new methods mainly gleaned from Russian structuralism for a new approach of the seemingly settled question of the alleged lack of structural unity in Arabic poetry. S. mentions these studies (Badawi, Daif, Van Gelder, Jakobi, Pinckney-Sterkevitch, Scheindlin) at the beginning of his work. He too undertakes to look at poetry mainly in terms of structures, naming Jakobson as his main reference. Right from the beginning he rejects the atomistic standpoint of Lewicki, even though van Gelder's *Beyond the Line* seemed to confirm it more or less and at any rate warned against giving too much attention to the unity or integrity of the individual poem.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, he deviates from Heinrichs, who based

<sup>1</sup> J.C. Bürgel, *Die ekphrastischen Epigramme des Abū Ṭālib al-Ma'mūnī*. Literaturkundliche Studie über einen arabischen Conceptisten. Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften. I. Phil.-hist. Kl. Jg: 1965 Nr. 4, (Göttingen 1966).

<sup>2</sup> W. Heinrichs, "Mannerismus" in der arabischen Literatur.' R. Gramlich (ed.), *Islamwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen Fritz Meier zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, (Wiesbaden 1974), 118-27.

<sup>3</sup> G.J.H. Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*. Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem, (Leiden 1982), 195.

his study of mannerism on single verses and arrived at the conclusion that the term is not applicable to Arabic poetry, its development being dominated by 'monism'. S. believes that the question can only be solved by looking at whole poems. For only in the integral poem is it that the relationship between language and reality can be fully perceived.

To reach his goal S. investigates mainly seven poems, two panegyrics by al-Buḥturī and one by Miḥyār al-Daylamī, two ascetic poems by Abū al-'Atāhiyah and two poems from the *Luzūmiyyāt* of Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī. A number of other poems are referred to and two descriptions of ships in particular, one by al-Buḥturī and the other by Miḥyār, play an important role in the author's argumentation.

The analysis of the poems is meticulous, painstaking, sometimes even painful in its linguistic detail, but, on the whole, indeed necessary and successful. The results S. arrives at are only gradually revealed. In the first three chapters he deals with panegyric, moving in waters already charted in his pioneering article on 'Islamic Kingship'.<sup>4</sup> His outlook is based on the conviction that in Abbasid times the panegyric *qasīdah* is 'still a ritual act' (27). At the same time, however, it 'was not a stagnant medium fettered by convention, but one well-suited to its task as prime repository of political ideas' (18). It was 'a formal testimony of the legitimacy of political authority. In its movement from chaos to order, from affliction to deliverance, from isolation to integration, the glory of the social order is proclaimed. Society and its values, present in the person of the ruler, are recreated triumphantly by the replay of symbolical events and the utterance of liturgical formulae of praise. Herein lies the significance of the structure of the panegyric. It is also the reason for its repetitious character and formalism. Like any liturgy, it follows a preordained, impersonal pattern.' (26)

In order to lay bare this internal 'movement' or structure, S. divides the long panegyrics into various sections, which, at least in the few examples analysed, are not only of similar length like the strophes of a poem, but display astonishing parallels and correspondences, particularly between *nasīb* and *madiḥ*. However, it is a bit misleading first to array these sections in two columns and then talk of 'horizontal, diagonal and vertical' relations. Among the recurrent relations between *nasīb* and *madiḥ* ('strophe' and 'antistrophe' as S. calls them occasionally) are the antitheses between separation and union, humiliation and victory, destruction and prosperity. The hero may even appear as a successful lover — as opposed to the unhappy one of the *nasīb* — for the caliph is married to the caliphate, the wazīr to his wazīrate in what resembles a *hieros gamos*, and the conquered town — Amorium of the Byzantines in particular — is taken by him like a proud slavegirl who has refused all previous wooers. In sum, whereas the hero of the *nasīb* (=the poet) is portrayed as the victim of Fate, the *mamdūḥ* is praised as its victor.

Apart from the thematic coherence, S. investigates the element of repetition in the structure of these poems. Al-Buḥturī's panegyrics are 'coherent statements to which every thematic unit makes a contribution. The semantic structure of the poems, as evident in the resumption and transformation of imagery and theme, is marked by instances of repetition: lexical, phonological, syntactic, or morphological. The repeated elements are mostly introduced in the initial section of the poem, the strophe, which thus has a prime structural function.' (47)

<sup>4</sup> 'Islamic Kingship and Arabic panegyric poetry in the early 9th century', *JAL* 10 (1977), 20-35.

In the extremely long *qaṣīdah* of Mihyār, S. again discovers certain 'leitmotifs' which structure the poem. But it is mainly by comparing two short texts, both descriptions of a ship, that S. succeeds in making plausible the stylistic difference of these two poets, which resides in their different attitude towards reality. Whereas al-Buḥtūrī's aim is to create a 'hierarchical universe' through the medium of language, Mihyār's interest and intention is directed mainly towards an artistic display of language. 'Whatever he describes is transformed by a metaphorical inversion: concepts and inanimate objects become animate, animate objects inanimate, animals are humanized, humans appear in the guise of animals; even the role of cause and effect is inverted. All is lifted into an artificial universe, structured and delineated by poetic tradition.' (59)

S. suggests subsuming this technique under three headings: *dislocation* (of traditional motifs from their ordinary setting), *variation* ('cases where different images express variations of one context,' and 'cases where different contexts are expressed by variations of one image'), and *extension* (of metaphors) (61).

The difference between the two poets can thus be described in the following way: 'In Buḥtūrī's style, the prime experience is the object with regard to its function in a context requiring praise or blame. His imagery endows it with the meaning that arises from its function and makes this meaning an innate quality with *a priori* existence. Thus the ordering process is directed towards the object. Being given meaning, it is assigned a place in a hierarchical universe.

In Mihyār's style, the body of motifs which constitutes the element of poetic expression is made to have *a priori* existence, and the ordering process is directed towards it rather than towards its referent.' (67)

The same principal difference appears in the comparison between Abū al-'Atāhiyah and al-Ma'arrī. 'Abū l-'Atāhiya does not juxtapose the startling and unfamiliar, but exploits restricted lexical "sets" to create mellifluousness and ease.' (176) Al-Ma'arrī, on the other hand, is interested in 'contrast and counterpoint, not transparency and harmony'. (176) His *Luzūmiyyāt* is 'learned poetry', including 'references and allusions to many facets of culture,' in sum, the result of 'an intellectual creed remote from the simple asceticism of the earlier model.' (97)

The chapter on al-Ma'arrī is the by far longest of this book, due again to meticulous, detailed analyses of the text. Full of insight is the passage devoted to the handling of paronomasia (104-07;137). These and other rhetorical figures used by al-Ma'arrī are in fact 'part of an exploration of language and meaning which characterizes the *Luzūmiyyāt* as a whole.' (106) Very convincingly, S. points out the function of these puns as enhancing the meaning. He could have added that very often mannerists (e.g. al-Ṣanawbarī) cared little about the implications of meaning if only the conceit was surprising, exploding like a rocket, whereas other poets, among them al-Ma'arrī and a whole range of Persian poets perhaps in his wake, cared very much, conveying additional messages built on the symbolism of sounds, apart from their semantic meaning, and thus on puns, which I proposed to call 'functional word-plays'.<sup>5</sup> One may point to three more prefigurations of Persian poetry present in al-Ma'arrī's *Luzūmiyyāt*, as analyzed by the author: the 'break-up of the *aghṛāḍ*' (the literary genres), the fact that 'the use of conventional imagery gives many passages in the work a symbolist quality' (111) and the element of

<sup>5</sup> 'Lautsymbolik und funktionales Wortspiel bei Rumi', *Der Islam* 51 (1974), 261-81.

ambivalence based on allusion (124). The importance of al-Ma'arri for Persian poetry seems to be a totally unexplored field, which would deserve a similarly sharp scrutiny as the one presented in this book.

S. also introduces here a simple but useful diagram which he calls the 'stylistic triangle', in order to show the mutual relationship between poetry, reality, and convention. Whereas in classical poetry, the attitude towards reality is guided by the Aristotelian notions of necessity and probability, the leading principles of mannerism are constraint and possibility, the constraint of self-imposed rules and the possibilities of the combinatory play with sounds, images, and concepts. Whereas the task of the classical poet was to construct a well-ordered universe with the caliph at its summit, which meant to subordinate his linguistic means to an all-pervasive principle, the phantasy of the mannerist poet was driven by the concern of creating conceits.

In the wake of H. Friedrich, who saw in mannerism an overdone style ('überfunktion des Stils') which was interested in reflecting and surpassing the works of the previous poets, S. delivers a less negative judgement of Arabic mannerism, regarding it as a style that 'expresses search for and exploration of a purely intralinguistic reality' and aptly calling it 'semiological mimesis' (180). And if Friedrich stressed the loss of a coherent worldview ('Weltzusammenhang') by the emancipation of metaphors, S. focusses on 'concord or discord between signifier and signified. Concord between signifier and signified reflects faith in the mimetic adequacy of language. The mannerist discord, on the other hand, expresses despair over its inadequacy as much as delight in its potential as a creator of meanings and patterns.' (180). In fact, he divides classic style and mannerist style along this line:

'In the classical and archaic *qasida*, description is subordinate to a universal hierarchy of values: whether camel, pasturing ground, or royal palace, their description is of immediate relevance to the moral message conveyed by the poem. Not so in mannerist mimesis: the moral significance of the objective world is irrelevant. In seeking mimesis of the semiological system, any object may serve as catalyst, may be transformed into metaphor to spread the wings of linguistic ingenuity.' (159)

Mannerism is thus no longer sought in the simple predominance of certain rhetorical figures, but in their function. Convincing as these definitions may sound, they seem difficult to maintain, when confronted with a number of other views advanced in this book. S. spends much time and effort on explaining the ascetic world view of al-Ma'arri (including vegetarianism and non-violence). But if al-Ma'arri is a mannerist and if in mannerism 'the moral significance of the objective world is irrelevant', al-Ma'arri's poetry would be reduced to a mere game with words and it would be a waste of time to find out about its moral implications. Yet, S. himself states: 'With the raw material of the craft of poetry — its linguistic and technical heritage — he proceeds to erect a new edifice. He re-defines every element of tradition in the light of what he considers morality and reason, and assigns it a new function in a new poetic realm, thus freeing it from the propagation of falsehood to which it had been lowered in the past.' (100) This is certainly true, but not in line with the definition of mannerism given above.

Likewise, it is hardly imaginable that al-Ma'arri wrote all the *Luzūmiyyāt*, or that a poet like Miḥyār wrote his long panegyric, out of 'despair' over the mimetic inadequacy of language. What I should have liked to see more strongly emphasized is the element of power, occasionally hinted at in the book. The poets created power (sometimes referred to as 'magic' or 'licit magic' in poetic self-reflections of those times), a power that might be used for various aims, mainly praise and its

contrary, blame (*hijā*), but also for gaining a powerful position and enhancing, or at least maintaining it in the constant rivalry of court poets. This power struggle engendered an ever increasing effort of whetting and grinding one's linguistic blades. A powerful language was created, but the attitude of power necessarily turned into pose when the goals it was used for were no longer believed in by the poets. S. speaks of the mannerist pose (163) and of the element of doubt. But for him the doubt is in the capacity of language adequately to imitate reality. He is not aware of the enormous element of untruth or insincerity involved in that panegyric poetry, even though this was hinted at by leading medieval critics such as 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī.

It seems to me that language is in fact put to the test ('hinterfragt') in the *Maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhānī and al-Harīrī, but again not out of despair, but out of suspicion of its potency. The amoral 'mightiness' of language, its instrumentality or disposability for everybody's use or misuse, are the innermost topic of the *Maqāmāt*.<sup>6</sup> According to S., the task of the panegyrists consisted in creating a hierarchic universe. But did they themselves believe in the legitimacy of the political authority their praise was to testify? At courts where murder, treason and intrigues were almost daily bread? There are verses in Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī which sound like a parody of what they seem to glorify. The message of the panegyric *qasīdah* was more often than not less truth than propaganda. It is here that the forced style may have a firm root, the wish to conceal the imposed untruthfulness by a pose of truthfulness. Yet, the result is the same: a discord between signifier and signified. My idea may therefore not be that far away from what the author meant by 'despair'. However this might be, the book is extremely useful, thought-provoking, and ingenious in its insights into the subtle structures of some great medieval Arabic poetry. In order to verify his views, further poems would have to be analyzed, a fact that S. is fully aware of (6).

Some remarks:

- p. 1, l. 7 read 'third century' instead of 'fifth century'.
- p. 15, l. 1 read 'Amfortas'.
- p. 17 The verse: 'God smote through you the twin towers of her' is an allusion to the Qur'ān, *Sūrah* 8,17.
- p. 26 'the Wazirate "offers herself" to the new Wazir'. The analogy is to that woman who offered herself to the Prophet, cf. A. Guillaume, *The life of Muhammad. A Translation of Ibn Ishāq's Sirat Rasūl Allāh*, (London 1955) 794.
- p. 29, v. 5 read 'heat' instead of 'pain', for it is the heat of love that has dried away the tears.
- l. 32 read 'Buḥturī' instead of 'Abū Tammām'.
- p. 93 read *ṣumman* instead of *ṣummam*.
- p. 95, l. 6 the noun after 'with' is missing.
- p. 122 To describe the earth as 'mother of stench' and a treacherous woman unworthy of man's love echoes the sermons of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.
- p. 123 read *ahjālīn* instead of *ahjālun*.
- p. 128 read *yu'jib-ka* instead of *yu'jab-ka*.
- p. 145 gazelles representing female beauty were turned from prey into hunter long before al-Ma'arrī.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cf. my 'Gesellschaftskritik im Schelmengewand. Überlegungen zu den Makamen l-Hamadhanis und al-Haririrs', *Asiatische Studien* 45 (1992), 228-56.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. my 'The Lady Gazelle and her Murderous Glances', *JAL* 20 (1989), 1-11.

p. 159, l. 4 read *lāqayā-hu alqayā-hu* instead of *lāqiyā-hu alqiyā-hu*.

p. 163 I cannot see that *na'am* expresses a mannerist pose.

p. 163 read *širta* instead of *sirta*.

The high value of the book is further enhanced by the seven poems that are presented in vocalized script (not without some slight faults) and an elegant translation.

UNIVERSITY OF BERN

J.C. BÜRCEL

GEOFFREY KHAN, *Arabic Papyri: Selected Material from the Khalili Collection* (Studies in the Khalili Collection, I), The Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992. Pp. 262+[2] + unnumbered monochrome illustrations including facsimiles of all papyri studied in the volume. Price: £ 35.00. ISBN: 0-19-727500-1.

Dr Nasser D. Khalili has, over the last twenty years or so, been building up a collection of Islamic art aimed at covering every aspect of the artistic production of the world of Islam. A catalogue of his collection is now being published in twenty-six volumes. In the course of cataloguing some scholars have uncovered subjects requiring more detailed presentation than is practicable in a general catalogue, and it has therefore been decided to establish the Studies in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, of which the present volume is the first.

The Collection includes some 400 Arabic papyri formerly the property of H.P. Kraus. Of these, 36 have been selected for detailed study in the volume under review. The selection, which is restricted to papyri antedating the Fatimid conquest of Egypt (358/968), comprises only (a) documents that are reasonably complete, and (b) fragments from which anything of importance can be extracted. Of these items, all but one have their origin in Egypt; the one exception is no. 6, which on the basis of internal evidence seems to have emanated from Northern Mesopotamia and is, on that account, of unusual interest.

GK has arranged his material under three heads, viz. 'Accounts' (pp. 48-97), 'Legal Documents' (pp. 98-119), and 'Letters' (pp. 120-253). After a foreword by N.D. Khalili and acknowledgements by GK the book opens with 'Bibliography and abbreviations' (pp. 11-22) and 'Introduction' (pp. 23-46), of which by far the greater part is devoted to a well-illustrated and instructive guide to palaeographical features of which note will be taken as the script of each papyrus is examined in turn. In the early part of the introduction GK quite properly explains the symbols he has adopted for the edition of his texts. Together these constitute what he terms a 'bracket system' (p. 27), and to this I take no exception since it is readily understood. I would, however, have preferred the use of printers' terms with which I have long been accustomed: parentheses (rather than 'round brackets'); angle brackets (rather than 'angular brackets'); and braces (rather than 'curly brackets').

In the body of the volume each of the selected papyri is presented and studied according to the following set pattern: (a) head-note on the subject-matter of the text followed by its date, putative or otherwise; (b) indication of the inventory number (Khalili collection) followed by a description of the physical features of the papyrus in question; (c) detailed description of the script in which the text of the papyrus is written; (d) transcription of the Arabic text in lines numbered according to the sequence followed in the original; (e) textual notes; (f) translation of the Arabic text; (g) commentary.

The volume closes with (a) 'List of papyri according to their edition number' (p. 254); (b) 'List of papyri according to their Inventory number' (p. 255); (c)